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Out of his
mind & into
the inkwell

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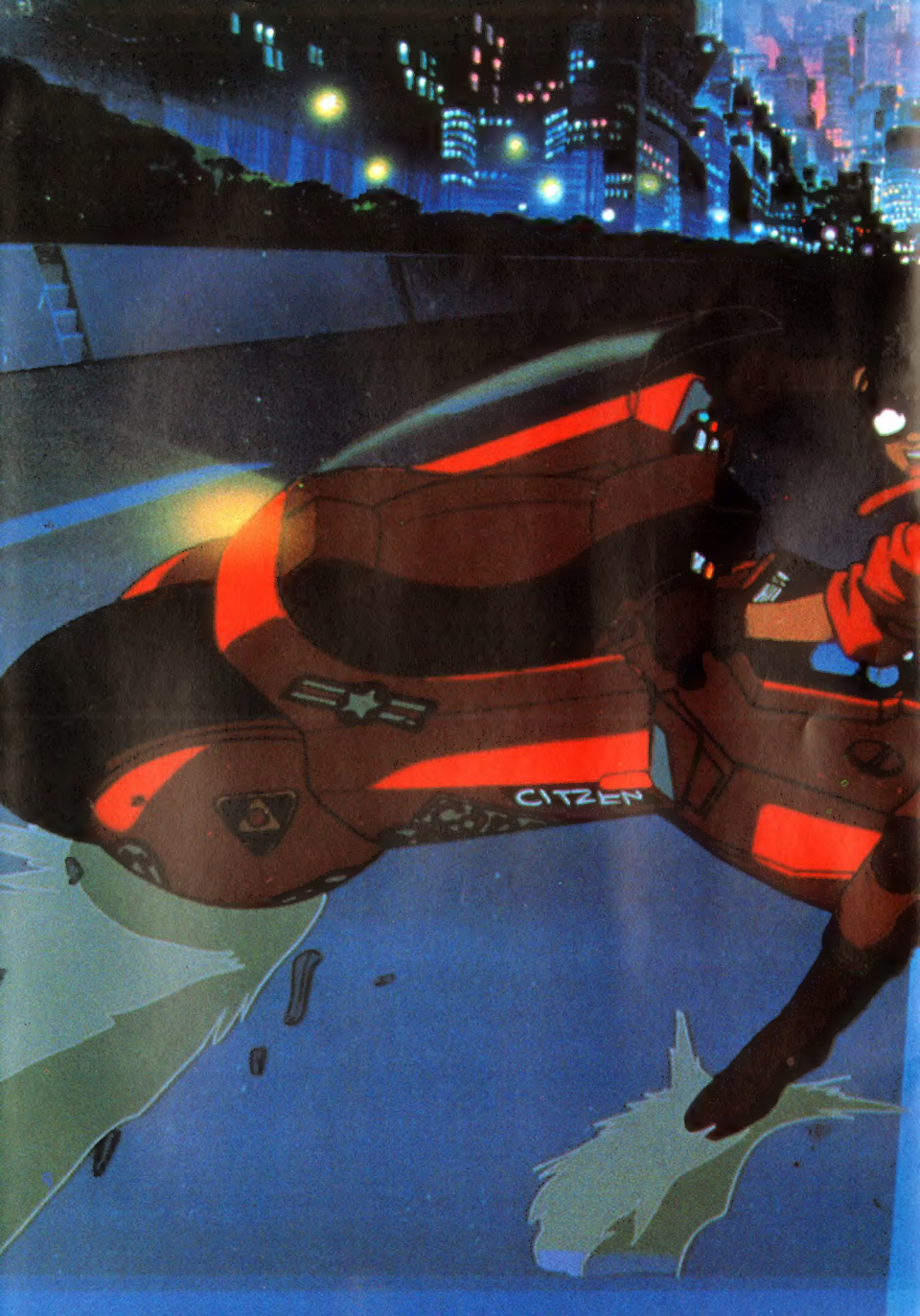


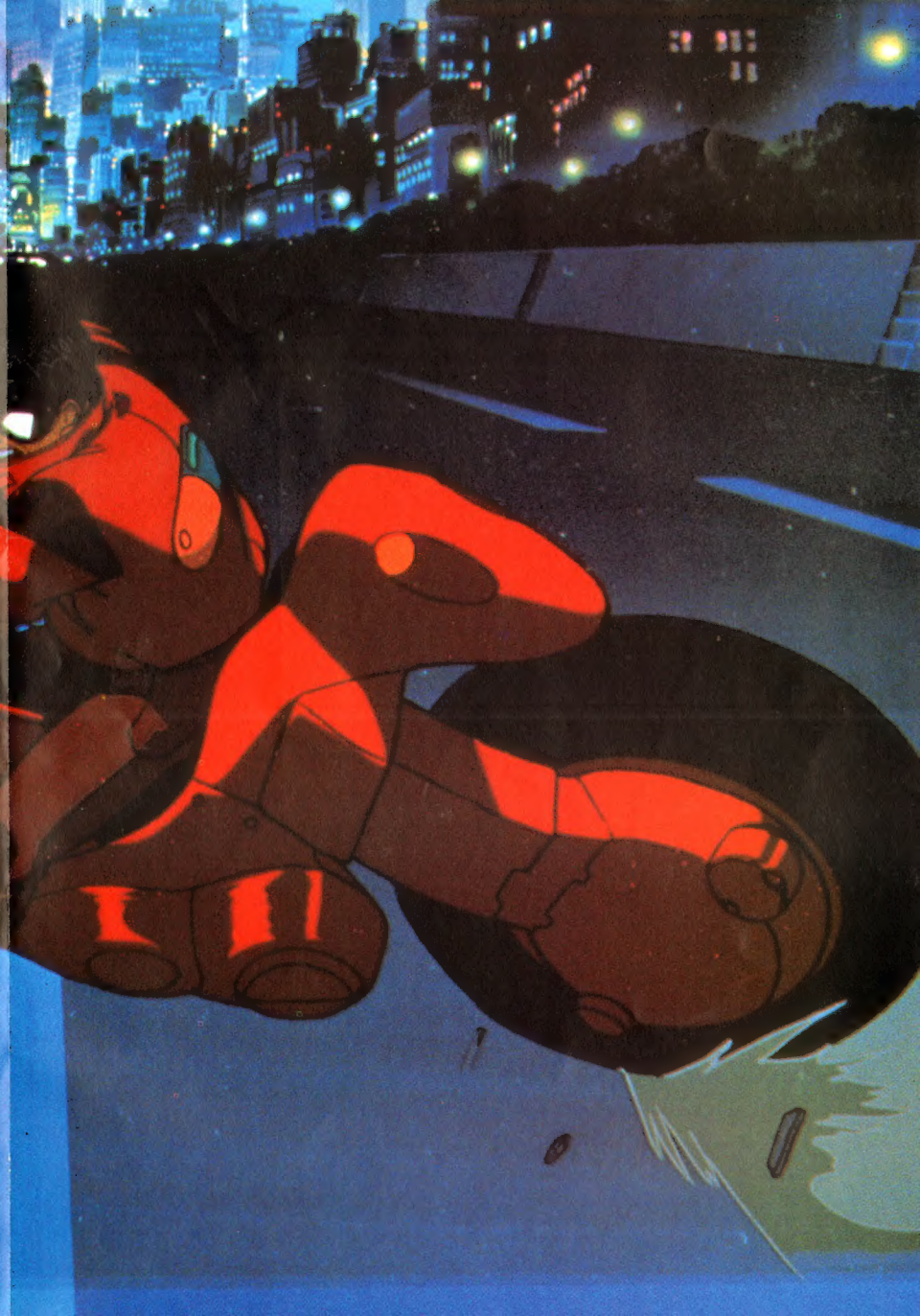
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NINJA
TURTLES
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RABBIT
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(See page 9)





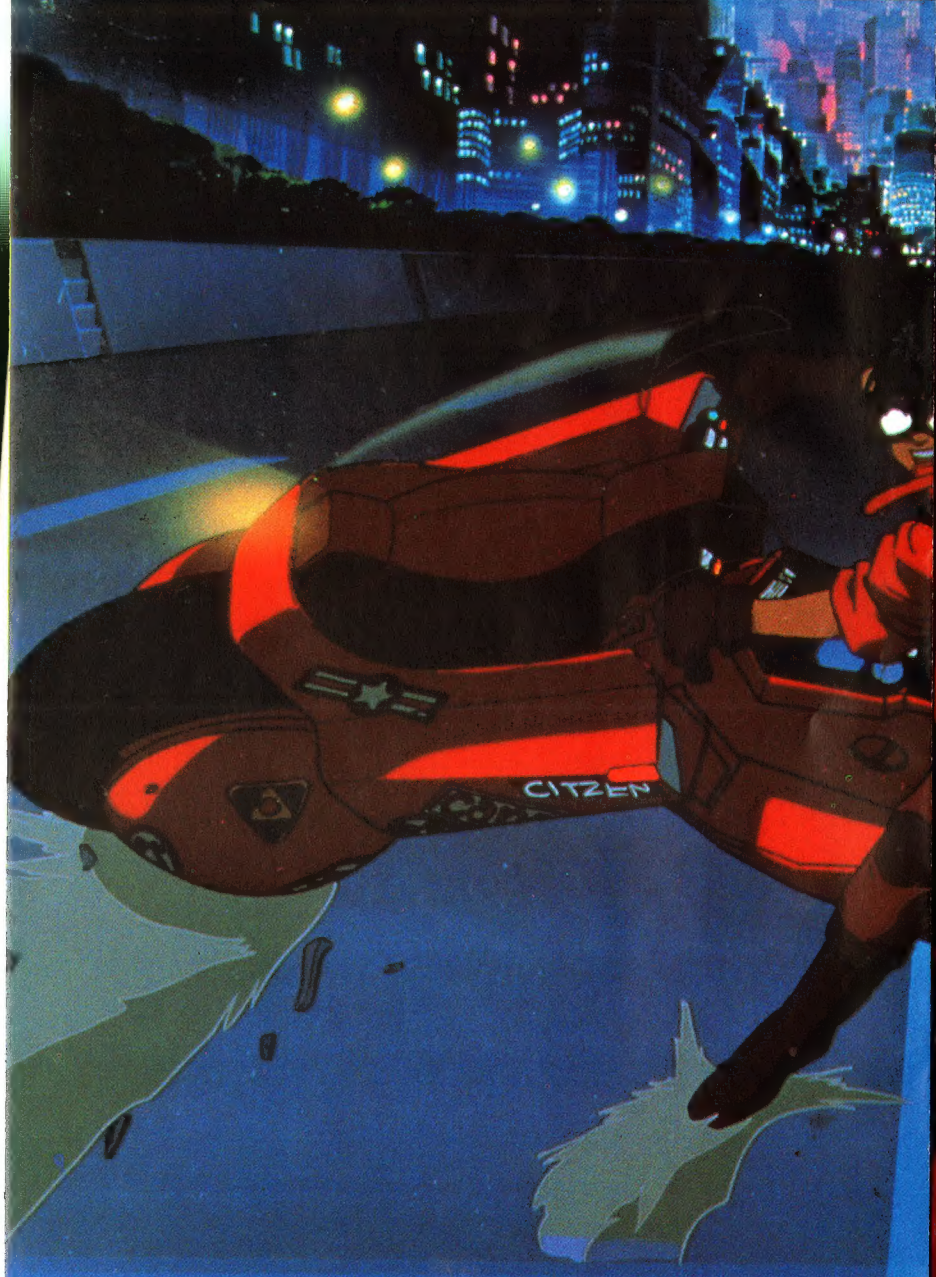












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TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
GREEN HORNET
BLACK PANTHER
THE FLASH
CAPTAIN AMERICA
ALPHA FLIGHT

GATEFOLD
AKIRA
DICK TRACY

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Turtle Tempests

Although they admittedly respect each other's work, it doesn't always seem that Jan Strnad and Richard Corben have the easiest of collaborations. In fact, when they came together for their recent miniseries *Son of Mutant World*, Strnad killed off the hero of Corben's original epic and changed its tone from high drama to high comedy (see COMICS SCENE #14). On the other hand, remarks Corben, "We'll seem like we're going on an even keel for a little bit, then I'll draw something in and he'll call up and say, 'What the heck is that?'" This same "carefree" style of working also saw them through the creation of *Turtles Take Time*, a special full-color one-shot issue featuring Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

"In *Turtles Take Time*, as the Turtles travel through time, they change physically to match the era that they're in. In pirate days, one of them has a little Errol Flynn mustache and one has an eye-patch...and Donatello has a peg leg.

"When it came time to drawing that, Richard felt real funny about drawing Donatello as disfigured. I think he was concerned about what Kevin Eastman would think. 'Would I want somebody to disfigure one of my characters?' Probably not." So, he drew Donatello with a good leg, but the leg was folded back and there was a peg leg attached at the knee the way it would be if there were a live actor playing a person with a bad leg.

"I called him and told him it didn't make sense as far as the story was concerned. 'Mark Martin turned them into household appliances. It's OK

COMICS SCENE



to give him a peg leg because he gets it back later in the story.' Rich redrew it, but that's a less common occurrence. I'll usually follow his lead once the art comes back."

Corben comments, "As the artist, my involvement is that I usually get much closer to a project than Jan does. This is because I might spend weeks drawing it, where he might do the writing in less than a week. So, I was with the Turtles day and night. Of course, they all look practically identical except for their weapons.

"As they travel through time, their weapons change too, but derived from the same weapons so we have to keep them straight. It was Jan's idea,

but I'm the one who had to do the deriving," Corben laughs. "Michaelangelo has the nunchuks, so when they go back to the Dawn of Man, the nunchuks become two rocks tied together like a bolo. Leonardo has the sword, so he just had a club. But Donatello, who has the long stick, has...a stick, because that's pretty basic. Raphael's sais were changed to sabre-tooth teeth. The confusion came between Donatello and Leonardo because one had a club and one had a stick and in some scenes they look identical.

"I also tried to keep them separated by changing their costumes slightly when they went back in time, but Jan

didn't catch that; he didn't look at the panels that closely."

While a trek from Mutant World to Mutant Turtles might seem natural, it actually took some convincing on Corben's part to get Strnad involved.

"I had agreed to do a Turtle book with Kevin Eastman. He was pretty flexible on how the story could develop, so I came up with a storyline and he thought it was OK," explains Corben. "It wasn't the pirates, but time travel.

"So, I came up with an outline but it was out of my league to handle humorous characters like that so I asked Jan if he was interested. He said no."

No? "I had plenty of work," Strnad begins in his defense. "In fact, I may have had too much work. I was afraid I might not have time to do all the things I said I was going to do." But at least he wanted to be involved? "Not particularly. When Richard called, my immediate reaction was 'Oh God, there's no way I could do this.' Then, I thought on it more and it sounded like fun. I looked at what other people had done with the Turtles lately, Rick Veitch and Mark Martin, and I realized I would have much more freedom with it than I thought."

"The Mirage comic books aren't as 'juvenile' as the cartoons," says Corben. "We went into it with the idea that we were going to enjoy this, too. If we went out of line, then it was up to Kevin to straighten us out. I had to beg for Jan for a while. I sent him all the stuff and he finally said he would do it. Then, of course, he did an outline that was...completely different," Corben laughs. "He did a complete synopsis, and from there, I drew it before we put any words in."

—Scott Lobdell

Upcoming Heroes

With Dick Tracy (Warren Beatty) blazing away at his fearsome foes (see gatefold) while Roger Rabbit copes with a bull market (see fold-out), it's an incredible time for heroes.

Akira, the "must-see" Japanese animation epic released by Streamline Pictures (see COMICS SCENE #11 & this issue's gatefold), is gradually playing throughout America to raves from genre fans.

Van Williams, TV's Green Hornet (with Bruce Lee as Kato on fold-out), has provided the story for a two-part *Tales of the Green Hornet* (published by Now Comics, currently on sale). The actor, however, is also a heroic lawman in real life as he reveals to Will Murray in an interview slated for a future COMICS SCENE: "I was involved in shootings, mountain rescue stuff, things like that. I've done what the Green Hornet does without running around in disguise. I went out there and

put my life on the line for the LA County Sheriff's Department."

New to the hero biz is John Wesley Shipp. He'll portray that super-speedster known as *The Flash* in a new one-hour TV series premiering on CBS this fall. For the first look at his Flash (in a costume design modified by *Rocketeer* artist Dave Stevens), see the fold-out. For even more on *The Flash*, look to forthcoming issues of COMICS SCENE.

And, of course, playing a hero does tend to give one a heroic viewpoint as Matt Salinger, who plays *Captain America* in a new movie (which may premiere on video, see fold-out), has discovered. "I like what the film is saying," Salinger tells COMICS SCENE's Marc Shapiro in an upcoming interview. "Captain America is very patriotic and he does love America. He isn't your typical superhero. But once you put on the costume and pick up the shield, it's not hard to really feel like Captain America."

—David McDonnell

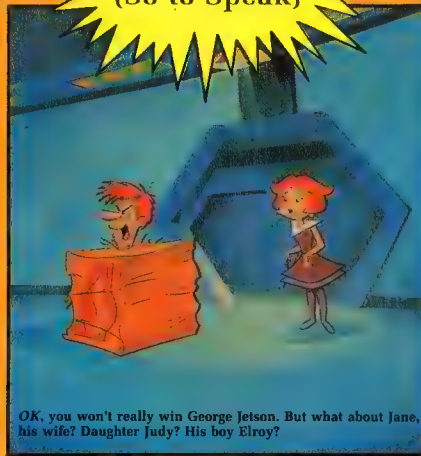
Bride of the "Black Panther"

At long last, T'Challa will take Monica Lynn to be his queen, but as all die-hard comics fans know, for a superhero, that walk down the aisle is rarely a safe one. And in the case of *The Black Panther*, writer Don McGregor and artist Dwayne Turner have put an international drug ring and the malevolent machinations of Solomon Prey and the Lightning Lancers in his way during this four-issue bookshelf format mini-series (see fold-out).

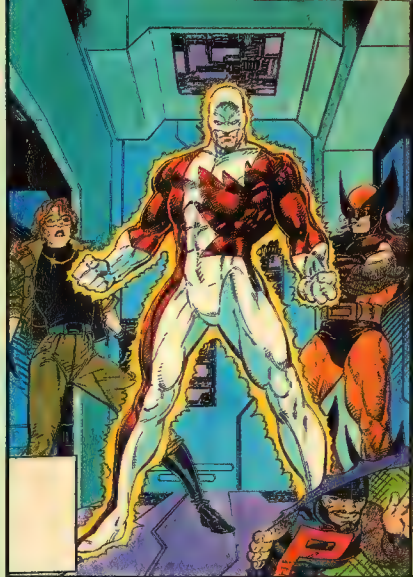


Art: Dwayne Turner/Copyright 1990 & Trademark Marvel Entertainment Group

Win George Jetson!
(So to Speak)



OK, you won't really win George Jetson. But what about Jane, his wife? Daughter Judy? His boy Elroy?



Alpha Flight Art: Ian Lee/Copyright 1990 & Trademark Marvel Entertainment Group

Back From the Dead & Ready to Party

Alpha Flight is in a shambles, and it looks like they must start over again if they're going to regain their former glory. Wolverine guest stars in the four-part storyline that kicks off Fabian Nicieza and Michael Bair's run on the title and reunites most of the original team, including a certain late, lamented champion, for an all-out battle with Gamma Flight and the Master (see fold-out).

The Jetsons are back—and exploring new animated spaces on the silver screen in *Jetsons: The Movie* (see page 47 & the fold-out).

But what's a cosmic picnic without *neato* Jetsons stuff? We've got some—and we want to give something to you.

Here's all you have to do: Send a postcard only (no envelopes please) with your carefully printed name and address (street/city/state/zip code) to Mr. George Jetson, c/o COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Avenue South, 8th Flr, NY, NY 10016. Only one entry per person, please. Multiple entries will be disqualified. Neatness counts, too: illegible addresses will also be disqualified. All decisions of the judges are final.

This contest is open to all except employees (and freelancers working for) of MCA Hanna-Barbera Productions, Spacely Sprockets, Cogswell Cogs and the Starlog Group and

their affiliates, subsidiaries and advertising agencies. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited by law.

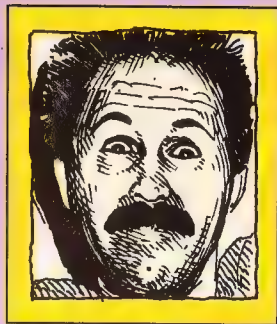
All entries must be received in the COMICS SCENE offices no later than September 6, 1990. A random postcard drawing will be conducted the following day, September 7, with prizes sent out shortly thereafter. Please note: No responsibility is assumed for lost, misdirected or late entries and lost, misdirected or damaged-in-mail prizes.

And what prizes they are! Through the courtesy of Universal Pictures, there are 55 of them. No one knows why

The First Prize (\$5): An official Jetsons watch, perfect for interstellar time-telling.

The Second Prize (25): An official *Jetsons: The Movie* T-shirt (All sizes X-Large).

The Third Prize (25): An official & semi-cosmic *Jetsons: The Movie* poster.



Brian Bolland, a reflection in ink.

Artist Brian Bolland isn't interested at all in many current comics. "At the moment, I'm very much off violence. I'm bored stiff with violence; it's just lame-brained," he says. "The debate about whether it's harmful—living on a rich diet of violence in the media is best left to someone else, but I just find it boring and stupid, and I would like to communicate a wider range of what goes on between people other than just

Whole he's out looking for something light. Brian Bolland keeps filling worlds into meeklings.



"I've got lots of pictures in my head that I've got to get out," says Bolland, including *The Actress* and *The Bishop*, the series he has written and drawn for the British anthology series *A1*.

Panel Boarder

punching each other.

"I like comedy. I don't find comedy as dumb as violence. Comedy isn't very fashionable now because the watchwords at the moment in comics are grim and grey; everything has to be pretty deadpan and grey. It almost looks pretentious to be that moody all the time. It's a bit like an actor doing a moody melodramatic performance—it doesn't seem to have the full range."

Bolland, the British artist who made his reputation rendering *Judge Dredd* and then consolidated it by drawing DC's *Camelot 3000* and *The Killing Joke*, is entering a new stage in his career. "I think a lighter phase came when I realized that comics is a medium of communication, and I had always been considering myself merely as a craftsman for hire," he says. "I did often find I was disappointed that all the people who liked my work were liking the drawing, but I didn't always feel that we provided them with a particularly good story to

go with the drawing. And it just seemed a real waste of effort to put all that work into drawing well—if you can—if the story you're telling is a load of tosh.

"I thought it was about time I really made a point of trying to integrate the two. Even though I'm not actually writing the stuff, at least I

By ADAM PIRANI

ought to make absolutely certain that the whole thing is of some use. So at that point, I began to get very picky about what stories I was going to draw." For Bolland, these decisions are also significant because of the speed at which he works. He spent slightly more than two years pencilling the 12 issues of *Camelot 3000* and just under two years pencilling and inking the 48-page *Killing Joke*.

Recently, Bolland has begun "writing the stuff" himself as well. He

has written and drawn a series of one-page strips titled *Mr. Mamoulain* which have appeared in small-circulation British magazines such as *Escape*. "It's still obscure because it has hardly been printed anywhere," Bolland notes. "The idea was that my work had become so polished, because it just looks a bit glossy and I spend a lot of time trying to get the finish right. It was very refreshing to just knock out something without considering the finish of the thing too much. So, each panel was drawn without any pencilling, and if it looked wrong, to hell with it, that was part of the exercise."

He has also written (in rhyming dialogue!) and drawn two episodes of *The Actress* and *The Bishop*, each several pages long, which have appeared in the British anthology series *A1*. Bolland has scripted and will soon draw a third episode.

"It's a learning period for me again," he says. "The *Mr. Mamoulain*

stuff is very self-indulgent observations about how I think about the world, accompanied by these fairly basic cartoons. *The Actress* and *The Bishop* really brings all the skills in my traditional—my *neat* style, as some people call it; the neat style is all there but the story is a little bit more personal. So, it's a period when I'm trying to discover which combination of these things works very well, and hopefully, I'll be able to collect them together in some form or other.

"I've got lots of pictures in my head that I've got to get out," Bolland says, "and so, I've got to really struggle to get stories written, and they are going to have to just turn up in obscure magazines like *A1*."

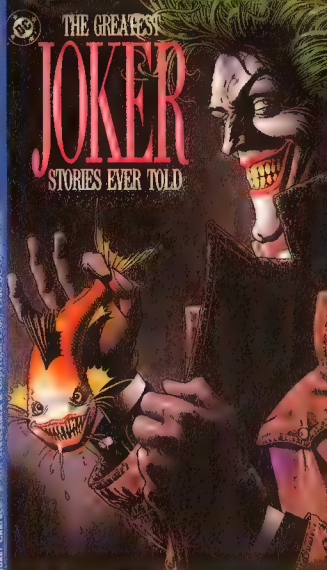
"The funny thing about me is that I draw in a very commercial way. I get the impression that it's the kind of way that the kids seem to like, and it communicates the story tolerably well. But when I come to thinking of stories, I just don't think in a very commercial way. The things that have interested me in film and in literature have always been slightly harder things—Peter Greenaway films (like *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*), Andrei Tarkovsky films

[such as *Solaris* and *The Mirror*], things like that."

Remarks Bolland, "Basically, I just want to draw the images that I really want to get out of my mind, and no writer knows what those images consist of, so it looks like I'm going to have to actually write the stuff. But my writing skills are very minimal, so it's hard work."

Aside from his entirely self-generated work, Bolland continues to draw covers—in comics, every month for DC's *Animal Man* and occasionally for *Batman*, and full color airbrushed work for books, magazines and other media. "The game plan at the moment is to do a lot of covers for people, because I enjoy doing them," he says. "I don't think of it just as hackwork, I really do like it. And I like being on the cover of one comic every month. But for the time being, the only strip work I'm doing is of the stuff that I'm writing myself. So far, it's all fairly short, just to get the hang of it."

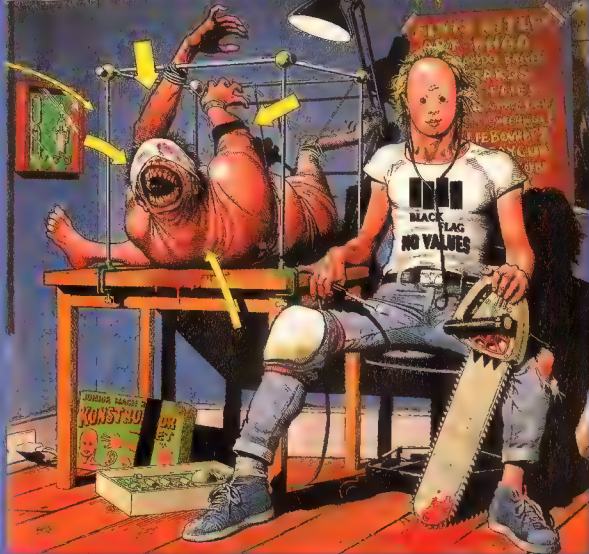
Possible future projects of a greater length—which Bolland would both write and draw—include a sequel to *The Killing Joke* and a story based on



"One of the most unflawed pieces of work I ever did was the cover of *The Greatest Joker Stories Ever Told*—I couldn't actually see anything wrong with that at all," admits Bolland, who plans an encore to *The Killing Joke*.

SOUNDS & SHIGAKU LIMITED PRESENT

Beautiful Happiness



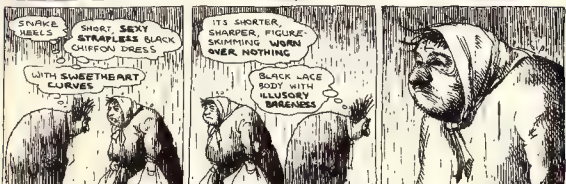
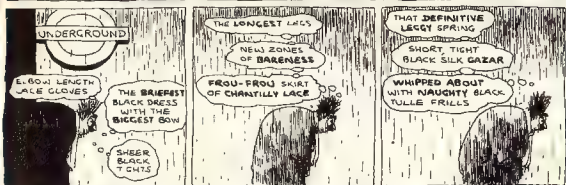
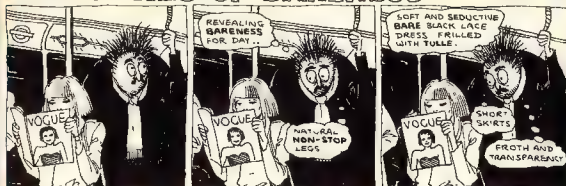
the biblical character Jezebel.

The latest of many artists who have sought to have more control over the entire content of their work, Bolland previously just took the scripts he was given and illustrated them. "Generally, I don't communicate in any way with the writer. I prefer not to," he says. "I wouldn't like him to interfere and tell me how to draw, and so, I wouldn't generally like to interfere with what he does."

"With *The Killing Joke*, Alan Moore rang me up once and said that he had got stuck; it was a scene where Commissioner Gordon was trussed up and he was being dragged through a ghost-train. Alan had gotten into a really bleak state thinking up all that stuff, so he rang me up. I listened to him thinking it through, and then he said, 'Oh, let's have [the Joker] singing.' So, I didn't actually have any input whatsoever. I just provided a sympathetic ear!"

"On *Camelot*, Mike Barr and I got on the phone quite a bit and I actually

The album provided his unique look to this artist cover featuring US independent bands for *Sounds*.



"The Mr. Mamoulion stuff are very self-indulgent observations about how I think about the world," explains Bolland of his attempt to write and draw something without fussing over it.

all, whereas I was limbering up to do a really good Gotham.

"I didn't feel restricted by what went before. The way Frank Miller had approached it was to explode it all and almost disregard what had gone before. I actually really liked a lot of what had gone before and I wanted to take the best elements, because all the good stuff had been there already and much of it had just been forgotten. So, I wanted to be true to the essence of the characters. If anything, Frank Miller's Batman is true to the essence of Frank Miller."

The Killing Joke won't be Bolland's last collaboration, however. Despite his current efforts to establish himself as a writer/artist, he says he will work again on others' scripts. "I keep thinking it's time I did get together

thought up a few of the characters. I thought up Isolde, who was the girl friend of the sex-change character Tristan, merely by saying, 'What about Isolde? There was the great love between the two in the original story.' There was also a big kind of Alien Queen Mother creature which I suggested to Mike Barr, so I suppose to that extent, I did have some input into that story."

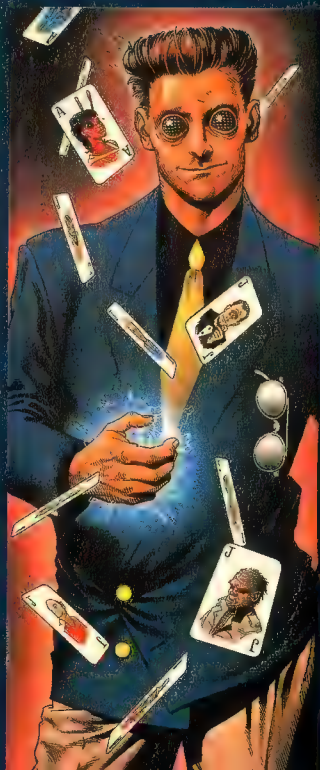
In general, Bolland has had his hands full without becoming involved in the script creation process. "There is usually a lot in the scripts. In particular, there was a lot in *The Killing Joke* script, and there was no way I really wanted to provide on paper, in pictures, less than he [Alan Moore] asked for. If anything, I would have liked to have given more than he asked for. Beyond that, it is just technical exercise.

"He gave me a lot of very specific instructions about which way the camera was pointing and whether it

was high or low, and many of the scenes were worked out in time and space, and the figures in the background would be going through some little drama or other. There was a barroom scene which was a favorite because it had that kind of three-dimensional scenario in time and space where the camera would be rotating."

Working on *The Killing Joke*, Bolland enjoyed drawing the established characters of Batman and the Joker, but was frustrated by the story's location. "I would have liked the story to have been set somewhere other than where it was set," he says. "I really love [Batman artist] Dick Sprang's work, and he seemed to use pictures of the city so well, and I wanted to incorporate the Batman image and Gotham into the story.

"Alan set it in a fun-fair, and I found it difficult. It seemed a little too obvious to have the Joker in a fun-fair, and I couldn't consequently think of any new approach to the fun-fair at





Bolland prefers that his "images communicate directly" to the audience without undue extrapolation. For the British editions of the *Wild Cards* series, he deals another set of Jokers.

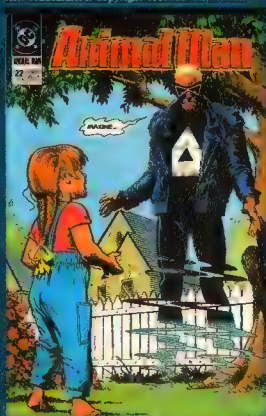
with somebody," he says. "I've been doing these *Animal Man* covers and I've been enjoying Grant Morrison's scripts on those and thinking, 'Maybe we ought to do something together.'"

There are other reasons for working on a prestige project after several years of just doing covers and short pieces for small circulation magazines. "I'll have to when the wolf arrives at the door," Bolland says. "I mean, I'm going to have to do another blockbuster book at some point, because you can't live on peanuts."

Although there has been much talk of a "British invasion" of American comics, for Bolland, working for DC has been "me getting back to roots, because I grew up on DC comics."

Artistically too, the 39-year-old artist identifies himself with the com-

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"I'm a DC man," affirms Bolland, who is quite pleased to be part of the company's cover history.

pany. "I'm a DC man," Bolland affirms. "At the moment, I'm doing covers for DC, and DC really has produced beautiful covers. The ones that Curt Swan produced on *Action*, the early '60s, late '50s covers, were simple and beautifully drawn, nothing excessive about them at all. And elegant—I would like to get that kind of elegance into the work, and contrary to some people, I don't actually put in more detail than is absolutely necessary. I like to *not* put a single line in that isn't necessary. Economy.

"The funny thing about me is that I draw in a very commercial way," confesses Bolland, which is why clients like the London listings magazine, *Time Out*, seek him out.

Time Out

LONDON'S WEEKLY GUIDE NOVEMBER 16-23 1988 No.952 £1

Free Film Ticket

IT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED!

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Plus: David Cronenberg meets Jimmy Irons • Warhol's last protégé •
 Cameo • Bill Murray • Heather S Thompson slays George Bush



"Howard the Duck was the one Marvel character I enjoyed drawing," Bolland says. His second shot at the duck on the cover of *She-Hulk* #14 didn't see print on that issue.



A classic example from *Judge Dredd* of what waits to get out of Bolland's head.

"I like the image to communicate directly. In Norman Rockwell's paintings, the first thing that comes across is what's going on in the picture, first and foremost. Then afterwards, you realize, 'It's beautifully done, isn't it?', and I think it's that priority. That's why I find that the Dave McKean/Bill Sienkiewicz school of work tends to be the other way around: The technique seems to hit you first and then you have to struggle to see what it's about."

Bolland says he looks for art that impresses him "largely in the cinema. Films are a great inspiration. That's pretty much all, really. I don't find I'm as excited by painting and general art as I used to be. I just go and see an exhibition of some great artists just for the entertainment value. I've always liked Francis Bacon. I like Lucien Freud, too. Many others I can't remember. But it's generally cinema, because cinema is preoccupied with that rectangle that it's stuck in, just as we are."

Bolland has been particularly preoccupied with the rectangle recently. "When I get drawing, I do tend to just get stuck at one panel at a time," he says. "Lately, I just isolate each panel—I do grids. I've got the habit of

Dave [Gibbons] and Alan [Moore]'s *Watchmen* grid idea, because I find that fancy panel compositions run contrary to the idea of telling the story. It's just another way of drawing your attention to the page, whereas your attention should be drawn to the story and what's going on through the windows in which you are looking, which are the panels.

"So, I am actually quite preoccupied with each individual panel. I tend to look at that without thinking about the rest. Really, by the time I have drawn all the panels separately, thinking about them all separately, if they don't fit together very well, then it's just a shame. I tend to leave the

Art: Brian Bolland/Bruce Patterson



When working with a writer, Bolland doesn't like to interfere in the plotting, but on *Camelot 3000*, writer Mike Barr incorporated some of his suggestions into the story.

overall page composition to chance, but I do get very obsessive about what goes on in each individual panel because I think of that like a cinema frame."

To Bolland, "the actual drawing of figures and things" is the most important aspect of his work. "I'm trying to get a good performance out of the 'actor' at the same time, which is part of it, because to me, good drawing is also the performance of the characters—the way people stand and the way people communicate with their body language and facial expressions and so on.

"I've always been trying to struggle with each individual picture to make it look good," says Brian Bolland. "I just want to draw well."













By MARC SHAPIRO

You run a risk when you attempt to bring back an old TV chestnut. And that was uppermost on creative minds when it was decided to bring the 1960s cartoon series *The Jetsons* not only into the '90s, but onto the big screen.

"When we mentioned that we were going to do a Jetsons movie, people would invariably get a look of disappointment on their faces," says *Jetsons: The Movie* supervising director Iwao Takamoto. "The people who were familiar with the old show didn't want many changes and we sort of cued into that when we decided to make this movie."

Takamoto, who is also vice president of creative design at Hanna-Barbera Productions, is commenting on the Jetsons' big screen debut during a mid-morning drawing stint in his Hollywood office. In another part of the Hanna-Barbera complex, others are laboring over the film's final edit.

"Now it's in the hands of the animation director," smiles Takamoto, "and that's fine with me. They're just about where they have to commit to an answer print [the film opened early this month] and I don't think they need another opinion at this point."



The family of the future launches itself onto the big screen and into even bigger problems.

Jetsons: The Movie, directed by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera from a screenplay by Dennis Marks, features the voices of the late George O'Hanlon and Mel Blanc (STARLOG #102), Penny Singleton, Don Messick, Patric Zimmerman and Ronnie Schell. It also boasts the talents of Takamoto, animation director David

Michener and songs courtesy of pop star Tiffany, who provides the voice for young Judy, replacing longtime Judy player Janet Waldo.

The story, which reunites the entire Jetson clan, focuses on George's unexpected promotion to vice president of an asteroid-based sprocket factory by his unscrupulous boss Mr.

Going Hollywood has changed the Jetsons, but it has made them more environmentally conscious.





Spacely. The family moves to the asteroid home where George discovers an alien life form called the Grunches whose living habitat is endangered by sprocket production. In the end, George must decide whether his career is worth the destruction of these creatures.

This animated film, according to Takamoto, contains a mixture of old and new *Jetsons* technoschtick. George, as usual, is late for work and must contend with his bubble car folding up around him. He still continues to run for the tube that will take him to his desk and his car still folds up to the size of a lunchbox. But now there are also such new wonders as 3-D holographic parks, houses in which the interior builds itself to fit your needs, cars that drive themselves and space-age basketball equipment.

"The difference between the old TV series and this movie is primarily dimensional, in terms of the animation process, and enrichment in terms

"That fun idea of the future is what we've tried to sustain in this film," admits Iwo Takamoto, using computer-enhanced backgrounds for the Jetsons and friends to play in.



Meet boy Elroy's new pal Teddy 2



The Flintstones in disguise?

of the story," explains Takamoto. "We've taken great pains to keep the TV series' integrity, its feeling and look. But we also felt that, with a movie's length and '90s technology to play around with, there was *much* more we could do."

Beginning, recalls Takamoto, with the storyline.

"The major challenge we saw in creating a story for a feature was to take the characters out of what had been fundamentally a sitcom situation and broaden it out into something that had a little more substance and dimension. I remember that a lot of brainstorming went on between Joe Barbera and Dennis Marks to get just the *right* elements of the story in place."

He also remembers what happened when the studio was handed a release date for *The Jetsons*.

"The date we were given was really tight, and so, we just plunged right into what you might call a crash course. I went ahead and story-boarded the entire film and we began working on the animation process. We were working with many people who had *never* worked on *The Jetsons* before and so we felt we had better get in and get our hands on it as soon as possible."

Pre-production on the film consisted of dealing primarily with technological differences.

"In the '60s, we had a much smaller camera table with limited capabilities," says Takamoto. "In the movie, we wanted to get air, space and perspective into the scenery and the characters so that they could act to a much greater degree.

"To help accomplish that, I went in and redesigned the Jetsons. I wasn't trying to change their look. What I was attempting to do was structure the characters in a way that would give the animators the tools they needed to stretch and squash them. The redesigning didn't change the look so much as it changed the underlying structure."

Animation for this cartoon feature began with the more traditional hand-drawn and colored cels. But the *Jetsons* filmmakers went to advanced techniques when it came to designing the film's settings and vehicles.

"We used advanced computer animation techniques to structure the scenic material in the backgrounds," Takamoto explains. "With this technique, the characters would actually travel through space rather than merely against a background. Using the computers enhanced the film's movements and created a much greater sense of distance. We see our characters moving from a given point toward an object *into* the screen rather than merely moving *across* it."

"The same idea was used in structuring the way the vehicular objects moved. We've used the computer animation to allow the space vehicles to move through space consistent with what was happening on the scenic background. It all boiled down to mixing the computer animation with the traditional cel animation process."

And while this mixing of old and new techniques gives a different look to *The Jetsons*, Takamoto claims it's far from innovative.

"It's more a matter of refinement than doing anything innovative," he

says. "Outside of the computer animation, what we've done isn't that far removed from the traditional animation process. We paid a lot of attention to turned shadows and light, the same techniques that have been used for years. So, it may be the '90s, but for the most part on this film, we've stuck to the tried-and-true techniques."

George Jetson, his boy Elroy, daughter Judy and Jane, his wife, first appeared on TV in September 1962. The creation of Joe Barbera and William Hanna, *The Jetsons* was derived, partially, from *The Flintstones* (another Hanna-Barbera creation, basically *The Honeymooners* in the Stone Age, that had just completed a successful first season) and designed to capitalize upon America's growing infatuation with space.

"It was very simple," Hanna once said. "We just thought, 'Let's do the flip side of *The Flintstones* and go into the future.'"

The Jetsons' blend of space-age gags and family situation comedy lasted only one season. But those 24 episodes continued to grow in popularity during 25 subsequent years in syndication. In 1985, Hanna-Barbera made 41 new *Jetsons* segments and, in 1987, an additional 10 were created to mark the 25th anniversary of the show's creation. This sweetened package has been a continual syndication success and ultimately paved the way for this foray onto the big screen.

Takamoto, who joined the Hanna-Barbera creative team in 1960 and was instrumental in the creative side of *The Jetsons*, offers his reason why a show that had such a short network run has managed to gather such a loyal following.

"The feeling of *The Jetsons* has always been G [rated]. It was a family-oriented show. The big twist on the show in those days was how people in the future would do things and I think the series was very close, in many areas, in predicting certain technologies. But the bottom line is that *The Jetsons* has always been a fun show and that fun idea of the future is what we've tried to sustain in this movie."

"If there was a prevailing attitude with the old shows, it was 'Look at the way things are today and wouldn't it be nice if—'. That's what we've tried real hard to get into this movie. But people shouldn't worry if that attitude doesn't get through to them. They should just sit back and enjoy *The Jetsons* for what it is, which is pure entertainment."

Yesterday, today and tomorrow. ☺

WILD CARDS™

By DREW BITTNER

WILD
CARDS



Art: Mike Mignola/Colors: Wright

All things eventually come full circle. Born from a writers' group's common love of comic books, the bestselling *Wild Cards* anthology series will finally become a comic book itself this summer when Epic releases a four-issue bookshelf format mini-series based on the paperback novels published by Bantam. Written by Lewis Shiner and several other *Wild Cards* authors and edited by Gregory Wright, this series will seek to introduce hardcore comics fans to the *Wild Cards* books while simultaneously giving the anthologies' readers an official *Wild Cards* story in a new medium.

For readers who may not have heard of the series, it is set in an alternate reality brought about by the release of an alien virus (dubbed the "Wild Card" because of its unpredictable results) over New York City in 1946. Most of the humans exposed to the virus died immediately, nine out of 10 survivors were horribly transformed, becoming monstrous "jokers." One in a hundred, labeled "aces," gained superhuman abilities while remaining (for the most part) visibly unchanged.

In this story, a mad bomber is on the loose in New York. His first target is Jetboy's Tomb, a monument to the high-flying young pilot who died trying to prevent the Wild Card bomb's detonation. Dr. Tachyon, an alien scientist whose family created the Wild Card, hires ace private eye Jay Ackroyd (also called Popinjay for his teleportation power) to track down the bomber, since Tachyon feels the police will not investigate due to rising anti-Wild Card prejudice.

"Throughout the books, we've had increasing amounts of hostility toward Wild Cards, both aces and jokers, to the point that Tachyon didn't feel the police were going to do much of an investigation, that they didn't care if aces were getting killed and their places getting blown up; that's fine and dandy as far as they're con-

What kind of hand will comics deal these paperback superheroes?



George R.R. Martin is on hand to give another novel look at Dr. Tachyon with able assist from artist Jackson Guice.

cerned," Shiner says. "So, Ackroyd is on the trail of the bomber and it gets increasingly intense as the story mounts."

To help introduce new readers to the *Wild Cards* universe, Shiner is sending Ackroyd around to visit the major characters, getting their stories and piecing together clues. All the while, he's sifting through the past, the largest part of which is Jetboy himself.

"We wanted to involve Jetboy, but we've got a problem—Jetboy has been dead for 40 years," Shiner says. "How much can you do with him? There are many people who remember Jetboy and some regard for him runs through the story, so this is as much Jetboy as you can get. Howard Waldrop retells his origin from the viewpoint of Smooth Eddy Shiloh, one of the characters from his story 'Thirty Minutes Over Broadway,' so Eddy becomes a major participant."

Other prominent aces get their moment in the spotlight as well. The super-strong, invulnerable Golden Boy "is the prime suspect in these explosions because he's *persona non grata* with most of the aces," Shiner explains. "We see a good bit of



Artist Tim Truman was no stranger to the *Wild Cards* realm having previously illustrated the new American editions.

Hands Art: Barry Kelsen

Card Art: Tim Truman/Copyright 1990 Bantam/Spectra Books

Tachyon, [the sorcerer] Fortunato comes in in a flashback and there's some question whether he might be involved. Yeoman [a non-powered archer] comes back, the Turtle [an incredibly powerful telekinetic who travels in a metal shell] is there and Groyd Crenson [who awakens every few months with a new body and new powers] is around, too."

Establishing these pre-existing characters and their backgrounds will help ease new readers into the *Wild Cards* universe, while providing paperback fans with a retelling of some of their favorite stories. Shiner says this format was chosen from the beginning.

"We had two objectives," Shiner notes. "We wanted someone to be able to come in without knowing anything about *Wild Cards* and be able to read

this story and enjoy it, to introduce them to the stories and maybe get them to want to read the books; and we wanted the people reading the books to try the comic, to give them something new and not just recap everything. People who only read comics wouldn't be handicapped and readers of the books would get something new."

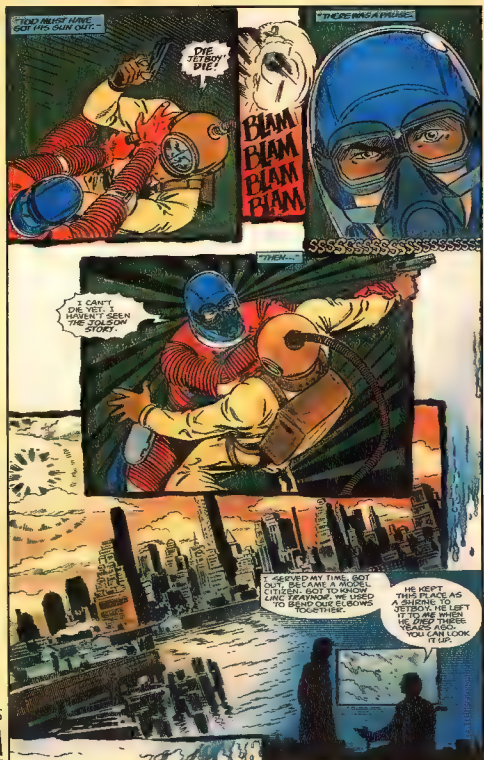
One thing that helped a great deal was that series editor Gregory Wright was *not* extremely familiar with the books. Comments Shiner, "Greg was not all that much of an expert on the series and that was a good thing, allowing us to have someone who could check and make sure he understood everything that was going on."

With *Wild Cards* a solid success as a paperback series, it's surprising that creating a *Wild Cards* comic has taken several years.



Art: Barry Kelsen

All *Wild Cards* Comic Art: Copyright 1990 Marvel Entertainment Group



"We wanted to involve Jetboy, but we've got a problem—Jetboy has been dead for 40 years," admits writer Lewis Shiner. Hence another need for flashbacks.

"The way it started was, I went ahead and wrote up a full proposal of an adaptation of *Aces High*, which is the second book of the series," Shiner says. "We thought we would do something in the modern day, featuring the characters in action, with the idea of a straight adaptation. We took that to Archie Goodwin at Epic."

Goodwin apparently liked the project, Shiner explains, but wasn't eager to do an adaptation. "He felt it would be much stronger if we could do original stories and tie them in. Of course, that's a lot more work, but what the heck? So, I sat down and tried to come up with a brand new storyline with enough history so people would know what's happening."

The major characters' origins are presented in flashback, so that their backgrounds can be presented concisely, without slowing down the main story. Each flashback was written by the *Wild Cards* author who created that character, with only one exception.

"The only writer who couldn't do it was Roger Zelazny," Shiner reports, "and I had Walton Simons go in for him. I got John Miller and his wife Gail Gerstner-Miller to do their characters, George R.R. Martin is in, Walter Jon Williams, Melinda Snodgrass. Howard Waldrop has done the Jetboy stuff and Stephen Leigh's doing Hartmann [a.k.a. the mind-controlling Puppetman]. So,

we've got pretty much the full complement of writers. They sent me scripts or outlines or whatever they could come up with and I worked them into script format. Technically, the framing story is by me and the flashbacks are collaborations. It was a little tricky, but the fact that we've worked together so much on the *Wild Cards* books has given us a really great working relationship."

Different artists are signed to do each flashback, Wright notes. Names associated with the project on the art side include Marshall Rogers (who illustrated Jetboy), Tim Truman (Veronica/Fortunato), Jackson Gulce (Dr. Tachyon), Larry Stroman (Peregrine, a beautiful winged TV celebrity), Tom Yeates (Yeoman), Michael Bair (Golden Boy), Barry Kitsen (Ackroyd), Mark Nelson (the Turtle) and Lee Weeks (Croyd Crenson).

"The problem I kept running into was that everyone was so busy, they couldn't meet the schedule needed to get the book out," the editor complains. "We lost many artists that way. Tim Truman was supposed to do the Jetboy sequence in the first issue, but once he knew what the schedule was, there was no way he could do it. However, his schedule was open enough by issue #3 that he could do a segment if he wanted to do it. Mike Mignola was going to do the Tachyon segment."

After tackling the chore of lining up artists, Wright faced a more formidable challenge: making sure the characters looked the same from story to story.

"I have to find out who draws what first and make sure they do a sketch of it quickly enough so I can get it to the next guy, so he can draw while the first guy is working. I had to make sure Jay Ackroyd was drawn the same every time someone drew him; the same goes for the Turtle and all these other characters. I hope everybody did what they're supposed to so I don't have someone with six different hairlines."

And, Wright adds, the characters and their world had to be rendered as realistically as the *Wild Cards* books are written. "The approach is much like Alan Moore did in *Watchmen*," he says. "There are many more places where people sit and talk about stuff. I think it translates well."

Shiner says that depicting powers in a "realistic" book was not a problem. "George [R.R. Martin, the anthologies' editor] had insisted that each power have a visual side to it. Most of them, like superstrength, are pretty obvious; it's clear what's going on. I haven't called for any wavy lines

Art: Tim Truman



Instead of dealing with Fortunato's high-flying adventures, Tim Truman was originally scheduled to handle Jetboy's exploits.

to depict psychic powers."

Although the depiction of powers may be straightforward, the mystery will not be. However, Shiner says that clues to the bomber's identity will be available to alert readers eager to try their hands at problem-solving. "I'm following all the rules of crime writing," he says. "It's all there. That's only fair to the readers."

As for the future of *Wild Cards* in the competitive world of comic book publishing, Lewis Shiner is very positive about the book's potential. "We've talked about this [as an ongoing project]. Advance word has been really enthusiastic; the artists have all loved doing it and we've got some really outstanding people. It's to our advantage that artists who couldn't do a

full-length series or even an entire issue are happy to do 10, 12 or 15 pages; that means we can get squeezed into the schedules of people we ordinarily couldn't get. We're talking about making it an annual event, assuming that sales justify it—a four-issue series every summer."

"If it does really well, we would be happy to do some more, but it depends on how well the series does," Gregory Wright says. "We're feeling very optimistic about it because it's a very good story with lots of interesting art. I think many comic fans who didn't want to read the books will pick this up, which'll help sales of the books, and I'm sure that people who've been reading the books are dying to get their hands on the comic." 



Art: Tim Yeates

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